

IN THE CLAIMS

The following list of claims will replace all prior versions, and prior listings, of claims in this application.

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A water-absorbent composition ~~containing~~ comprising from 30 to 100% by weight, based on the water-absorbent composition, of water-insoluble water-swellaable hydrogels characterized by the following features:

- Centrifuge Retention Capacity (CRC) of at least 24 g/g,
- Saline Flow Conductivity (SFC) of at least $80 \times 10^{-7} \text{ cm}^3 \text{ s/g}$ and
- Free Swell Rate (FSR) of at least 0.15 g/g s and/or Vortex Time of not more than 160 s.

Claim 2 (Original): A water-absorbent composition as claimed in claim 1, wherein the water-swellaable hydrogels are present in conjunction with a base material for the hydrogels.

Claim 3 (Original): A water-absorbent composition as claimed in claim 2, wherein the water-swellaable hydrogels are embedded as particles in a polymer fiber matrix or an open-celled polymer foam, fixed on a sheetlike base material or present as particles in chambers formed from a base material.

Claim 4 (Currently Amended): A water-absorbent composition as claimed in ~~any of~~ claim 1 to 3, wherein the hydrogels are coated with a steric or electrostatic spacer.

Claim 5 (Currently Amended): The A process for producing water-absorbent compositions as claimed in ~~any of claims~~ claim 2 to 4 by comprising

- preparing the water-swellaable hydrogels,
- ~~— optionally coating the hydrogels with a steric or electrostatic spacer and~~
- ~~conjoining the hydrogels to the~~ a base material, ~~preferably introducing the hydrogels into a polymer fiber matrix or an open-celled polymer foam or into chambers formed from a base material or fixing on a sheet-like base material.~~

Claim 6 (Currently Amended): A method of producing hygiene articles or other articles for absorbing aqueous fluids, comprising joining ~~The use of the~~ water-absorbent compositions as claimed in ~~any of claims~~ claim 1 to 4 for producing hygiene articles or other articles for absorbing aqueous fluids with at least one other material.

Claim 7 (Currently Amended): Hygiene articles ~~containing~~ comprising a water-absorbent composition as claimed in ~~any of claims~~ claim 1 to 4 between a liquid-pervious topsheet and a liquid-impervious backsheet.

Claim 8 (Original): Hygiene articles as claimed in claim 7 ~~in the form of~~ which are diapers, sanitary napkins, ~~and~~ or incontinence products.

Claim 9 (Original): ~~The~~ A method for improving the performance profile of water-absorbent compositions by enhancing the permeability, capacity and swell rate of the water-absorbent compositions ~~by use of~~ comprising incorporating a water-insoluble water-swellaable hydrogels characterized by the following property spectrum:

- Centrifuge Retention Capacity (CRC) of at least 24 g/g,

- Saline Flow Conductivity (SFC) of at least $80 \times 10^{-7} \text{ cm}^3 \text{ s/g}$ and
- Free Swell Rate (FSR) of at least 0.15 g/g s and/or Vortex Time of not more than 160 s into the water-absorbent composition.

Claim 10 (Original): ~~The~~ A method for determining water-absorbent compositions possessing high permeability, capacity and swell rate ~~by comprising~~ measuring the Centrifuge Retention Capacity (CRC), Saline Flow Conductivity (SFC), Free Swell Rate (FSR) and/or Vortex Time for water-insoluble water-swellaable hydrogels present in a given water-absorbent composition; and determining the water-absorbent compositions ~~whose~~ wherein the hydrogels are characterized by the following property spectrum:

- CRC of at least 24 g/g ,
- SFC of at least $80 \times 10^{-7} \text{ cm}^3 \text{ s/g}$ and
- FSR of at least 0.15 g/g s and/or Vortex Time of not more than 160 s.

Claim 11 (Currently Amended): A method of producing hygiene articles or other articles for absorbing aqueous fluids, comprising joining at least one other material with ~~The use of the~~ water-absorbent compositions ~~containing water in soluble water swellaable hydrogels characterized by the following features of claim 3:~~

- ~~—— Centrifuge Retention Capacity (CRC) of at least 24 g/g ,~~
- ~~—— Saline Flow Conductivity (SFC) of at least $80 \times 10^{-7} \text{ cm}^3 \text{ s/g}$ and~~
- ~~—— Free Swell Rate (FSR) of at least 0.15 g/g s and/or Vortex Time of not more than 160 s,~~

~~in hygiene articles or other articles for absorbing aqueous fluids to enhance the permeability, capacity and swell rate~~ of said articles.

Claim 12 (New): A water-absorbent composition as claimed in claim 2, wherein the hydrogels are coated with a steric or electrostatic spacer.

Claim 13 (New): A water-absorbent composition as claimed in claim 3, wherein the hydrogels are coated with a steric or electrostatic spacer.

Claim 14 (New): The process for producing water-absorbent compositions according to claim 5, further comprising coating the hydrogels with a steric or electrostatic spacer.

Claim 15 (New): The process for producing water-absorbent compositions according to claim 5, said hydrogels are conjoined to said base material by introducing the hydrogels into a polymer fiber matrix or an open-celled polymer foam or into chambers formed from a base material or fixing on a sheet-like base material.